

MEMORANDUM

To: Tracy Stone-Manning, Chief of Staff
Governor's Office

From: Sherriff Leo Dutton, Chairman
Statewide Interoperability Governing Board

Cc: Siri Smillie, Policy Advisor
Governor's Office

Ron Baldwin, State Chief Information Officer
Department of Administration

Subject: Recommendations for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the statewide land mobile radio system

Executive Order 16-2015, which provides for the Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB), states: "...the SIGB shall: E. recommend strategies to the Governor for effective implementation of the SIGB's plan for ongoing operation and maintenance of the statewide land mobile radio system in Montana."

Regarding this directive, the SIGB has adopted the following recommendations:

1. The current model of many system asset owners (over 55 agencies own infrastructure of some type in the system) does not work. It is too complicated to get anything done and the procurement rules and schedules for all of the various owners do not align. To resolve this issue, **the SIGB recommends that a single state agency own and manage the system.**

This single agency would be responsible for day to day operation, maintenance, and securing the necessary resources to fulfill the requirements of the system. **The SIGB recommends that the Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) be given the responsibility and ownership of all current state-owned public safety radio infrastructure in state law. Specifically, the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) should be designated to lead and support the system's governance.** MHP's connection with the State's public safety community clearly places it in a unique position for leadership and to communicate with stakeholders with experience and mutual understanding of the critical nature of interoperable communications and specifically the statewide land mobile radio (LMR) system. DOJ's support of the proposed management and ownership of "all current state-owned public safety radio infrastructure" is contingent upon DOJ receiving the necessary resources (FTE and funding) to fulfill these responsibilities. **Therefore, the SIGB recommends that funding in the amount of**

\$925,600 in SFY 2018 and \$485,600 in SFY 2019 be appropriated to provide DOJ/MHP with the required resources.

2. The SIGB also recommends that state funding for system maintenance and upgrades be appropriated. The number of lives that depend on the statewide system - and the liability that both the State of Montana and local governments face should communications fail due to any system failures are too great to ignore. The statewide LMR system is a critical piece of the state's public safety communications infrastructure.

Attached to this memorandum are two funding options for your consideration. The first (option 1) is considered the minimum, and provides a budgetary number for the minimum software upgrade to the system. This is very similar to the previous budget request from two years ago in that it does the minimum software upgrade and does not address any future requirements. The second (option 2) not only accomplishes the minimum software upgrade, but it also accomplishes the following:

- Upgrades the system software to an even newer release than option 1
- This is a "jump upgrade" and does two upgrades at the same time
- Replaces the existing MHP dispatch positions
- These are completely out of support and facilitates the "jump upgrade" savings
- Creates a fully-redundant network so that there is no single point of failure in the system core
- Begins to convert initial communications sites to 800 MHz for improved system performance

As you can see, option 2 will certainly cost more, but because of the economies of combining multiple projects and upgrades, we are spending our tax dollars more wisely by getting more accomplished than doing the projects separately. Most importantly, these upgrades will begin to address many of the long-standing perception issues with the system and create a solid foundation upon which to build and grow support. **It is therefore the recommendation of the SIGB that funding be appropriated to fund option 2 as detailed in the attachment.**

In closing, it should be noted that recommendation #1 and #2 will require legislation. These recommendations will create the governance model and provide the required resources to maintain the system, but will have a small overall impact to the state budget and are critically important for the future success of public safety communications in Montana.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like more details, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and we can schedule a briefing.